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Mr. IRELAND's
Vindication of his Conduct,

RESPECTING
THE PUBLICATION
OF THE
Supposed Shakspeare MSS.

BEING
A PREFACE OR INTRODUCTION
TO

A REPLY
TO THE CRITICAL LABORS OF
Mr. MALONE,

IN HIS
"ENQUIRY INTO THE AUTHENTICITY OF
"CERTAIN PAPERS, &c. &c."

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY MR. FAULDER AND MR. ROBSON, NEW
BOND STREET; MR. EGERTON, WHITEHALL;
AND MESSRS. WHITE, FLEET STREET.

1796.

153. 67

May. 1873.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following sheets originally formed a part of a work now in considerable forwardness, as a reply to Mr. Malone's critical labors on the subject of the Shakspeare MSS. The body of this work required considerable research, and, so large a portion of time for its completion, as to render some further delay unavoidable in the publication of the whole. But this part of the work having been completed and ready for the public eye, I have yielded to the importunities of my friends, who have suggested to me the necessity at this moment, of laying before the public such further particulars as relate to my conduct therein. It will be observed that I have adverted in the course of the following pages to Mr. Malone: and if the animadversions should be deemed irrelevant, I trust, that no other apology is necessary, than the intimation already given, of my having intended this Vindication as an introduction to the work alluded to, and therefore that it was a more eligible plan, not to make any deviation from the method, I at first determined upon pursuing.

A recent circumstance, with which the Public is well acquainted, seems to call for this Vindication, and
even

even (painful as it is) to impose the measure upon me as a solemn duty, and obligation. I allude to the public statement, made by my Son. The world to which he has appealed, will judge and pronounce upon the truth of the allegations, and the weight of the testimonies, which he has laid before them. I beg to assure the public that the refutation of Mr. Malone's book shall be brought forward with all possible speed; in which, whether the papers imputed to Shakspeare are genuine or not, it will be clearly shewn, that he embarked in this enquiry as utterly destitute of the information of a philologist, and the acumen of a Critic, as it will, by his gross and repeated personalities, be manifested, that his selfish and interested views have made him throughout lose sight of the manners of a Gentleman.

ERRATA.

- Page 12, last line but 1, after *my* read *friends*
 12, line 10, after *to* add *the*
 18, — 11, for *it* read *them*
 27, — 13, before *Frank* read *John*
 30, — 1, for *enter into* read *make*

A

VINDICATION, &c.

THE most unequivocal characteristic of an enlightened age, is the licence which is indulged to all, of free communication with the public on doubtful, and controverted subjects. There are, indeed, some questions, in the discussion of which it will be always difficult to persuade the world; that mutual toleration is the most conducive to the interests of truth, and the most auxiliary to the operation of human reason.

But on topics of merely literary reference, that these enmities should at all exist, must appear singular, and even paradoxical. For in literary contests there is scarcely any appeal to any

A.

passion.

passion. They can neither provoke the hopes, nor vibrate on the fears of mankind, to any considerable degree. It must, therefore, be a satisfactory reflection to those, who have remarked on the history of the human mind, that the mutual hostility, and bigotry, which once deformed the writings of critics and philologists, is at this moment, with few exceptions, totally extinguished. Posterity, when they read the works of Salmasius, or Bentley, will be perplexed, even in finding motives for a spirit so intolerant, and a zeal so intractable on matters of such light, and trivial import.

There are, however, exceptions to a remark, so honorable to the taste, and liberality of our age. There are still some remnants of that *exploded discipline*, which from the disuse into which it has fallen, must at this time, be highly disgusting to the lovers of English literature. The arrogance of schoolmen without their learning, the rancour of controversy without the wit by which it is embellished, must at the present period,

period, demand the severest, and most exemplary animadversion.

Mr. Malone has acquired, it may be said, some degree of literary reputation. It is that sort of reputation, to which a laborious and patient frame of mind, in all the departments of literature has its peculiar pretensions. But neither Mr. Malone, nor any other labourer of the same description, has any privilege of over leaping the province, to the drudgery of which a limited capacity has destined him, while a patient, and charitable world does not deny him the small pittance of fame, that arises out of it. *Illâ se jactet in aulâ.* Mr. Malone, of all writers, has the slightest pretensions to that majestic character, he has lately assumed, and by virtue of which he undertakes not only to discuss, but to decide on literary questions, as well as to asperse the moral reputations of those, who differ from him in opinion.

The appeal, which I am now about to make

from the sentence, which this gentleman has passed upon the papers in question, primarily originates from that solicitude to vindicate my own character, which it must be naturally supposed, I cannot but feel on this occasion. Whether the critical reasonings of Mr. Malone are solid, or unfounded, whether he is entitled to any degree of reputation, as a philologist, or critic, by the publication of his enquiry, are questions of which the discussion will be postponed, till my answer appears before the public. At present I am merely claiming the attention of the reader to those topics, which relate to my own personal agency in the transaction.

With regard to the manner in which my own character is attacked, it will unquestionably be expected that I should speak fully and amply. It is true Mr. Malone deals only in insinuations; and insinuations, malevolent and slanderous as they are, may easily be repelled. It is true also, that these insinuations are conveyed in a manner, which neither resembles the overbearing acute-
ness

ness of Dr. Bentley, nor the subtle poignancy of Bishop Warburton. But insinuations may be troublesome, and even noxious; because the dullest being alive may at length, by reiteration and importunity, in some measure, atone for the bluntness and impotence of the shafts with which he assails you. It may indeed be said that these attacks are of a puny and ineffectual nature; but to remain indifferent to such attacks, is a philosophy which I have never arrogated; and it would look like a sort of affected stoicism, to appear silent and unmoved, amidst such malicious and calumniating aspersions.

Through the whole course of his pamphlet, Mr. Malone speaks of the "Impostor," and the "Imposture." I remember in Mr. Locke, a long chapter on words, and the intellectual associations which belong to them. In a well-known essay on the sublime and beautiful Mr. Locke's doctrine is opposed; and it is contended that words are independent of ideas. The author applied this doctrine only to works of taste, but particularly

particularly to poetry. But in the subject to which Mr. Malone has extended the theory nothing surely can be more ridiculous than the use of words without ideas ; and until any thing of the sublime and beautiful be discovered in the prose of that gentleman, the good sense and taste of the world will condemn the use of words which are utterly destitute of a meaning ; especially when they are employed on a subject of reasoning and demonstration. Would not the conduct of that judge be ludicrous as well as indecent, who on a criminal matter, should use the words traitor, murderer, or thief, in his address to the jury, concerning the evidence before them ? So in the controversy upon the Shakespeare MSS it would have been better reasoning, as well as more candid hostility, to have proved the imposture before he proclaimed the impostor.

In reply to these charges against me, I shall lay before the public some striking documents, which will constitute a most irrefragable system
of

of evidence in my favor, and furnish the best refutation of what has been alledged against me. I shall first repeat that which I have told the world already, and then I shall enter into the statements, which corroborate and fortify what I have hitherto asserted.

In the preface to my folio collection of *Shakspeare* MSS I stated all the circumstances relative to them, as minutely as my own knowledge of them and the delicacy of my situation permitted me. I shall now repeat the assertion, with no other addition than my solemn protestation of its truth.

“ It may be expected, that something should
 “ be said by the editor, of the manner in which
 “ these papers came into his hands. He received them from his Son, Samuel William
 “ Henry Ireland, a young man, then under
 “ nineteen years of age, by whom the discovery was accidentally made at the house of a
 “ gentleman of considerable property.”

“ Amongst

“ Amongst a mass of family papers, the
 “ contracts between Shakspeare, Lowine and
 “ Condell, and the lease granted by him and
 “ Hemynge to Michael Frazer, which was first
 “ found, were discovered, and soon after the
 “ deed of gift to William Henry Ireland (de-
 “ scribed as the friend of Shakspeare, in con-
 “ sequence of his having saved his life on the
 “ river Thames, when in extreme danger of
 “ being drowned) and also the deed of trust to
 “ John Hemynge were discovered. In pursu-
 “ ing this search, he was so fortunate as to dis-
 “ cover some deeds very material to the in-
 “ terests of this gentleman, and such as esta-
 “ blished beyond all doubt, his title to a confi-
 “ derable property. In return for this service,
 “ added to the consideration, that the young
 “ man bore the same name, and arms, with
 “ the person, who saved the life of Shakspeare,
 “ the gentleman promised him every thing re-
 “ lative to the subject, that had been or should
 “ be found either in town or at his country
 “ house. At this house the principal part of
 “ the

“ the papers, with a great variety of books
 “ containing the MSS notes and three MSS
 “ plays, with part of another were disco-
 “ vered.”

“ Fortified as he is with the opinion of the
 “ unprejudiced and the intelligent, the editor
 “ will not allow that it can be presumption in
 “ him to say, that he has no doubt of the truth
 “ and authenticity of that which he lays before
 “ the public. Of this fact he is as fully satis-
 “ fied, as he is with the honor that has been
 “ observed to him upon this subject. So cir-
 “ cumstanced, he should not feel justified in im-
 “ portuning, or any way requesting a gentle-
 “ man, to whom he is known only by obliga-
 “ tion, to subject himself to the impertinence
 “ and licentiousness of literary curiosity and ca-
 “ vil, unless he should himself voluntarily come
 “ forward. But this is not all. It was not till
 “ after the mass of papers received, became vo-
 “ luminous, that Mr. Ireland had any idea of

B

“ printing

“ printing them : he then applied for his per-
 “ mission so to do,* and this was not obtained,
 “ but under the strongest injunction that his
 “ name should not appear. This injunction
 “ has thro’ all the stages of this business been
 “ uniformly declared : and, as this gentleman
 “ has dealt most liberally with the editor, he
 “ can confidently say, that in his turn he has
 “ with equal openness and candour conducted
 “ himself towards the public, to whom imme-
 “ diately upon every communication made,
 “ every thing has been submitted without
 “ reserve.”

The information, which induced me to lay
 this statement before the public, was derived
 from written declarations of my son, and from

* The reader is here requested to understand, that the
 application made to the supposed original possessor, was not
 personal, but by letters given by him to his son, to be con-
 veyed by him, and by answers received, thro’ the same
 channel.

those

those of his friend Mr. Talbot, of the Dublin Theatre. I now present to the world the account of the discovery, as it was written by my son, and which is at this time, in my possession.

“ *November 10th, 1795.*

“ I was at chambers, when Talbot called
 “ in, and shewed me a deed, signed Shakspeare.
 “ I was much astonished, and mentioned the
 “ pleasure my father would receive, could he
 “ but see it. Talbot then said, I might shew
 “ it. I did not for two days : and at the end
 “ of that term he gave it me. I then pressed
 “ hard to know, where it was found. After
 “ two or three days had elapsed, he introduced
 “ me to the party. He was with me in the
 “ room, but took little trouble in searching.
 “ I found a second deed, and a third, and two
 “ or three loose papers. We also discovered
 “ a deed, which ascertained to the party landed
 “ property, of which he had then no knowledge.
 “ In consequence of having found this, he told

“ us, we might keep every deed, every scrap
 “ of paper relative to Shakspeare. Little was
 “ discovered in town, but what was above men-
 “ tioned, but the rest came from the country;
 “ owing to the papers having been removed from
 “ London, many years ago.

“ S. W. H. Ireland.”

Being naturally desirous of obtaining the evi-
 dence of Mr. Talbot, to confirm what had been
 advanced by my son, I applied to the former,
 and received from him an answer, from which I
 have made the following extracts.

Carmarthen, November 25, 1795.

“ Dear Sir,

“ The gentleman, in whose possession these
 “ things were found, was a friend of mine; and
 “ by me your Son Samuel was introduced to his
 “ acquaintance. One morning in rummaging
 “ from mere curiosity some old lumber, consist-
 “ ing of deeds, books, &c. in a closet of my
 “ friend’s house, I discovered a deed with the
 “ signature

“ signature of William Shakspeare, which in-
 “ duced me to read part of it, and on reading
 “ the words “ Stratford on Avon” I was con-
 “ vinced it was the famous English Bard: with
 “ permission of my friend (whom I will in future
 “ call Mr. H——) I carried the deed to Sa-
 “ muel, knowing with what enthusiasm, he and
 “ yourself regarded the works of that author,
 “ or any trifling article he was possessed of;
 “ though I was prepared to see my friend Sa-
 “ muel a little pleased with what I presented to
 “ him, yet I did not expect that great joy he
 “ felt on the occasion. He told me there was
 “ nothing known of the hand writing of Shak-
 “ speare, but his signature to some deed or will
 “ in Doctors Commons, and pressed me to carry
 “ him to H——’s house, that he might see,
 “ if there was amongst the lumber I had spoken
 “ of, any other such relique. I immediately
 “ complied with his request. This was Samuel’s
 “ first introduction. For several successive
 “ mornings we passed some hours in examining
 “ different papers and deeds, most of which
 “ were

“ were useless, and uninteresting. But our
 “ labor was rewarded by finding a few more
 “ relating to Shakspeare. These we took away,
 “ but never without H’s permission. At last
 “ we were so fortunate as to discover a deed,
 “ in which our friend was materially concerned.
 “ Some landed property, which had been long
 “ the subject of litigation was here ascertained,
 “ and H’s title to it clearly proved. H. now
 “ said in return for this, whatever you and Mr.
 “ Ireland find among the lumber, be it what it
 “ may, shall be your own (meaning those things
 “ which we should prize for being Shakspeare’s)
 “ Mr. H. just before my departure from Lon-
 “ don, strictly enjoined us never to mention him
 “ as the possessor of the papers. Tho’ I wished
 “ until Sam. should have completed his re-
 “ searches, that little should have been said on
 “ the subject, yet I was ignorant, why H. when
 “ the search was finished, should still wish his
 “ name concealed. I thought it absurd and
 “ could not prevail on him to mention his rea-
 “ sons; tho’ from some trifling unguarded ex-
 “ pression

“ preſſion, I was at laſt induced to believe that
 “ one of his anceſtors was a cotemporary of
 “ Shakspeare in the dramatic profeſſion ; that
 “ as he H. was a man ſomewhat known in the
 “ world, and in the walk of high life, he did
 “ not wiſh ſuch a circumſtance ſhould be made
 “ public; this ſuſpicion was, as it will preſently
 “ appear, well founded. Whilſt I was in Dub-
 “ lin, I heard to my great joy and aſtoniſhment,
 “ that Sam had diſcovered the play of Vorti-
 “ gern and Rowena, the MS of Lear, &c.
 “ &c. I was impatient to hear every parti-
 “ cular, and principally for that purpoſe made
 “ my late viſit to London. I found H. what I
 “ always thought him, a Man of ſtrict honor,
 “ and willing to abide by the promiſe he made,
 “ in conſequence of our finding the deed, by
 “ which he benefitted ſo much. I will now ex-
 “ plain the reaſon of H’s ſecrecy. On account
 “ of your deſire to give the world ſome explan-
 “ ation of the buſineſs, and your telling me,
 “ that ſuch explanation was neceſſary, I re-
 “ newed my entreaties to him, to ſuffer us to diſ-
 “ discover

“ cover his name, place of abode, and every
 “ circumstance of the discovery of the papers,
 “ but in vain. I proceeded to prove as well
 “ as I could the folly of its concealment, when
 “ he produced a deed of gift, which he himself
 “ had just found in the closet, just before my
 “ departure from London, in January last, but
 “ which I had never seen before. By this deed
 “ William Shakspeare assigned to John ———
 “ who it seems was really an ancestor of our friend
 “ H. every article contained in an upper room.
 “ The articles were, furniture, cups, a miniature
 “ picture, and many other things; but except-
 “ ing the miniature (which was lately found
 “ and which was a likeness of Shakspeare him-
 “ self), and the papers, very few of them re-
 “ main in H’s hands, and the rest very unfor-
 “ tunately cannot be traced. It is supposed too,
 “ that many valuable papers have been lost, and
 “ are destroyed, as the whole lumber is never
 “ remembered to have been at all valued or
 “ guarded from the hands of the lowest domef-
 “ tics. When I parted from you a few weeks
 since

“ since, H. promised me that the deed of
 “ gift above mentioned should be sent you,
 “ first erasing and cutting out the name of the
 “ grantee.* I hope, my dear Sir, I have omit-
 “ ted nothing in relating these circumstances,
 “ and though this account may not enable you
 “ perfectly to satisfy many, who from an idle
 “ curiosity would know more, yet the liberal-
 “ minded, I am sure will allow that you have
 “ just reasons for with-holding what is, and is to
 “ be concealed. I most earnestly beg you will
 “ send me a copy of Vortigern and Rowena, as
 “ soon as it can conveniently be written, with the
 “ margin marked, according to the curtailment
 “ for Stage representation.

“ M. Talbot.
 “ S. Ireland, Esq.”

* Within a few days after the receipt of the above, the deed of trust alluded to, was brought to me by my Son, without any erasure, as mentioned in the above letter, and was the deed of trust to John Hemyng, inserted in the folio volume of the Shakspeare papers.

Upon this authority and with this degree of testimony, I proceeded to the publication of the papers. Yet it may by some be objected, that the weight of the whole evidence collectively taken, is still weak and imperfect, on account of the concealment of the name of the gentleman alluded to. But what inference does this objection authorise? It was such as entirely to militate against any suspicion of fraud in my breast. For had the papers been forged, I could not imagine that the fabricators of it would have left that part of its evidence, to which by ordinary minds, and according to ordinary rules of judgment, the greatest weight is usually attributed, so palpably mutilated, and defective. I could not imagine that it could have been the work of one impostor, when I considered the infinite variety of the papers, and the length of time which must have been consumed on so elaborate a fiction. For it must have been very extraordinary, that of all those who were concerned in the imposture, not one should have suggested

suggested the necessity of forging completer testimonies, respecting the place, and person, in whose possession they were found:

Besides these reasons, coming as they did through the channel of my Son, I could not suspect their authenticity; and every thing I had remarked of Mr. Talbot during my acquaintance with him, placed him in my judgment beyond even the possibility of suspicion, his fairness and honesty in the transaction appeared invariable. A father is not very eager to entertain surmises, that affect the moral credit of one so dearly connected with him as his only son, and when the same declarations were made by him in the most solemn and awful manner, before crowds of the most eminent characters, who came to my house, I could not suffer myself to cherish the slightest suspicion of his veracity:

The testimonies here adduced it were difficult to resist. But these were not all by which my conduct was governed in this transaction.

I invited to my house all who wished to gratify their curiosity, by an inspection of the papers. Of these, the greater part consisting of the most celebrated literary characters this age has produced, expressed their opinions, not in the phrase of mere assent, but in the unequivocal language of a full and overflowing conviction. Some were even desirous of subscribing without solicitation, their names to a certificate, in which their belief might be formally and permanently recorded. The first of this respectable list was the rev. Dr. Parr. I informed this gentleman, that the late James Boswell, Esq. had requested my permission to annex his name to a certificate, vouching for the validity of the papers and which he drew up for that purpose. When I shewed the Doctor, at his request what Mr. Boswell had written the day before, he exclaimed with his characteristic energy and manner, that it was too feebly expressed for the importance of the subject; and begged that he might himself dictate to me the following form of a certificate, to which he immediately subscribed his own name,

and

and which afterwards received the signatures of the other respectable characters, that are annexed to it.

“ We whose names are hereunto subscribed
“ have, in the presence and by the favor of
“ Mr. Ireland, inspected the Shakspeare papers,
“ and are convinced of their authenticity.”

Samuel Parr.

John Tweddell.

Thomas Burgefs.

John Byng.

James Bindley.

Herbert Croft.

Somerfet.

If. Heard, Garter King of Arms.

F. Webb.

R. Valpy.

James Boswell.*

* Mr. Boswell, previous to signing his name, fell upon his knees, and in a tone of enthusiasm, and exultation, thanked God, that he had lived to witness this discovery, and exclaimed that he could now die in peace.

Lauderdale.

Lauderdale.

Rev. J. Scott.

Kinnaird.

John Pinkerton.

Thomas Hunt.

Henry James Pye.

Rev. N. Thornbury.

Jonⁿ. Hewlett, Translator of old Records,
Common Pleas Office, Temple.

Mat. Wyatt.

John Frank Newton.

The following is a catalogue of the papers
above alluded to, dated

February 25th, 1795.

1. Viz. Shakspeare's profession of faith on
two small sheets of paper.

2. His copy of a letter to Lord Southamp-
ton, and Lord Southampton's answer.

3. His letter to Richard Cowley, inclosing
a curious drawing in pen and ink of himself.

4. His

4. His letter to Anna Hatherwaye, the lady whom he afterwards married, inclosing a braided lock of his hair.

5. Five poetical stanzas, addressed to the same lady, in his own hand writing.

6. His note of hand, payable one month after date to John Hemynge, for five pounds, and five shillings, together with John Hemynge's receipt the day it became due.

7. A lease of six acres of land, and two houses abutting on the Globe Theatre, granted by William Shakspeare to Michael Frazer, and signed and sealed by the respective parties.

8. Deed of agreement between William Shakspeare and Henry Condell for the weekly payment of a certain sum therein specified for the theatrical services of the said Henry Condell, signed and sealed by the respective parties.

9. Deed

9. Deed of agreement between William Shakspeare and John Lowine for the weekly payment of a certain sum therein specified for the theatrical services of the said John Lowine, signed and sealed by the respective parties.

10. A small whole length of a tinted drawing, supposed to be of Shakspeare in the character of Bassanio, and on the reverse side the whole length of a person in the character of Shylock, in its original black frame.

11. An original letter of Queen Elizabeth to Shakspeare, authenticated by himself.

In *March* 1796, In consequence of Mr. Albany Wallis having recently made a discovery of some deeds relative to Shakespeare and Ireland, the following Certificate was signed by the gentlemen, whose names are annexed to it, after having carefully perused and collated the said deeds with those in my possession.

“ *London,*

“ *London, March, 1796.*

“ We the undersigned, having inspected the
“ following deeds in the possession of Albany
“ Wallis, Esq. of Norfolk Street, viz.

“ A conveyance, dated 10th *March, 1612,*
“ said to be from Henry Walker to William
“ Shakspeare, William Johnson, John Jackson,
“ and John Hemynges, of a house in Black-
“ friars, then or late being in the occupation of
“ one William Ireland; signed Wm. Shak-
“ speare, Jo. Jackson, and Wm. Johnson.

“ And a deed dated 10th *February, 1617,*
“ being a conveyance signed Jo. Jackson, Wm.
“ Johnson, and John Hemynges of the same
“ premises;

“ Having also inspected the following papers
“ of Mr. Samuel Ireland of Norfolk Street,
“ viz.

D

“ A MS.

“ A MS. Play of Lear, a fragment of
 “ Hamlet, a play of Vortigern—several deeds,
 “ witnessed Wm. Shakspeare—several receipts
 “ and notes of disbursements of monies on ac-
 “ count of the Globe and certain Theatres—
 “ familiar letters signed Wm. Shakspeare, and
 “ other miscellaneous MSS.

“ And having compared the hand writing of
 “ the above papers in Mr. Ireland’s possession,
 “ with the signatures of Shakspeare and He-
 “ mynge to the deed in Mr. Wallis’s hands, as
 “ well as with the published Fac-similes of the
 “ autographs of Shakspeare to his last will and
 “ testament, and to a deed dated 11 *March*, 10
 “ Jac. I. which came to the hands of Mr. Wal-
 “ lis, about the year 1760, among the title deeds
 “ of the Rev. Mr. Fetherstonehaugh, and from
 “ the character and manner thereof, we declare
 “ our firm belief in the authenticity of the auto-
 “ graphs of Shakspeare, and Hemynge, in the
 “ hands of Mr. Ireland.

Isaac

Isaac Heard, Gr. K. at Arms.

Francis Webb.

Albany Wallis.

Richard Troward.

Jon^{ns}. Hewlett, Translator of old Records,

Common Pleas Office, Temple.

John Byng.

Francis Townsend, Windsor Herald.

Gilbert Franklin, Wimpole Street.

Matthew Wyatt, New Inn.

Richard Valpy, Reading.

Joseph Skinner.

Frank Newton, Wimpole Street.

It may perhaps be almost unnecessary to state that I might have obtained innumerable signatures to each of the certificates, I have laid before the public, had I resorted to any solicitations for the purpose. The very respectable list of subscribers to the publication of Shakspeare's MSS may be adverted to, as a corroborating proof in favor of their validity and in justification of my sending them into the world.

I shall now present to the reader a voluntary deposition formally drawn on stamped paper, and intended to be taken before a magistrate by my son.

“ Samuel William Henry Ireland, of Norfolk Street, in the parish of St. Clement Danes, in the county of Middlesex, Gent. maketh voluntary oath that since the 16th day of Dec. 1794, he this deponent hath at various times deposited in the house of this deponent’s Father, Samuel Ireland, of Norfolk Street aforefaid, several deeds and MSS papers signed and supposed to be written by Wm. Shakspear and others. And this deponent farther maketh oath and faith that the deeds and MSS papers now open for inspection, at his this deponent’s father’s house, are the same which he this deponent so deposited as aforefaid; and whereas several disputes have arisen concerning the originality of the deeds and MS papers aforefaid, and whereas Edmund Malone, of Queen Anne Street East, of
“ the

“ the parish of St. Mary-le-Bone, in the said
 “ county of Middlesex, hath publicly adver-
 “ vertised or caused to be advertised an assertion
 “ to the effect that he, the said Edmond Ma-
 “ lone, had discovered the above mentioned
 “ papers and MS deeds to be a forgery, which
 “ assertion may tend to injure the reputation of
 “ his the said deponent’s father. Now this de-
 “ ponent farther maketh oath that he this de-
 “ ponent’s father, the said Samuel Ireland, hath
 “ not, nor hath any one of the said Samuel Ire-
 “ land’s family, other than save and except this
 “ deponent, any knowledge of the manner in
 “ which he the said deponent, became possessed
 “ of the said deeds or MSS papers aforesaid or
 “ any part thereof, or of any circumstance, or
 “ circumstances relating thereto.

“ S. W. H. Ireland.

“ Sworn before me this day of March,
 “ 1796.”

Copied verbatim from the hand writing of
my Son.

It

It being thought unnecessary to enter into a formal deposition upon the subject, my son was not sworn to what he has here deposed. But Mr. Albany Wallis in May following drew up the advertisement which I have here subjoined, conceiving it more adequate to the purpose, which was inserted in the True Briton, Morning Herald, and other papers.

“ Shakspeare MSS.

“ In justice to my father, and to remove
 “ the reproach, under which he has innocently
 “ fallen, respecting the papers published by him
 “ as the MSS of Shakspeare, I do hereby
 “ solemnly declare that they were given to him
 “ by me, as the genuine productions of Shaks-
 “ peare, and that he was and is at this moment
 “ totally unacquainted with the source from
 “ whence they came, or with any circumstance
 “ concerning them, save what he was told by
 “ myself, and which he has declared in the
 “ preface to his publication. With this firm
 “ belief

“ belief and conviction of their authenticity,
“ founded on the credit he gave to me and my
“ assurances, they were laid before the world.
“ This will be further confirmed, when at some
“ future period it may be judged expedient to
“ disclose the means by which they were ob-
“ tained.

“ S. W. H. Ireland, Jun.”

Witness,

Albany Wallis.

Thomas Trowdale, Clerk to Messrs.

Wallis and Troward.

Norfolk Street, May 24, 1796.

This is surely very ample testimony, which my son has adduced, to establish my innocence of the imputed forgery. I corroborate this testimony by some further quotations from several letters, written by Mr. M. Talbot, already mentioned to myself and my family, of which the originals are preserved in my possession.

Dublin,

Dublin, 15th April, 1796.

“ So much do I lament the unfortunate
 “ predicament in which Mr. Ireland is involv-
 “ ed, that I must do every thing in my power
 “ to extricate him from it, consistent with my
 “ own honour, and oath. The offer I shall
 “ make, therefore will, I hope, be accepted
 “ definitively without urging any more proposals,
 “ since any others must of necessity be declined
 “ by me, though my life were the forfeit for
 “ being secret. I will make an affidavit jointly
 “ with Sam. “ *That Mr. Ireland is innocent of any*
 “ *forgery imputed to him; that he is equally as unac-*
 “ *quainted with the discovery of the papers, as the*
 “ *world in general; that he has been only the pub-*
 “ *lisher of them: and that the secret is known to*
 “ *no more than Sam. myself, and a third person,*
 “ *whom Mr. Ireland is not acquainted with.*”

“ If

“ If our making this affidavit and the publication of it will serve Mr. Ireland, Sam and myself are both ready to stand forward.”

“ If I may venture an opinion, I still think it probable that the papers are genuine, that Vortigern may have been one of Shakspeare’s first essays at dramatic writing.”

“ The play of Henry 2d I never have seen, nor the manuscript of Vortigern, nor any thing relative to it, till I was in London, long after the latter was in Mr. Sheridan’s hands. I must therefore depend on the veracity of others, as to their coming from the same source as the few manuscripts I saw before I left London the first time.”

“ Mr. Ireland has desired my opinion respecting a plan he proposes of making two gentlemen of respectability acquainted with every circumstance, who are to vouch to the world for the authenticity of the MSS.

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“ This

" This will not be consistent with our promise
 " and oath."

" M. Talbot."

It is worth remarking, that about a week before the receipt of this letter (and strange as it may appear, at the particular request of my son) a committee consisting of twenty-four respectable gentlemen met at my house, for the purpose of taking into consideration every circumstance relative to the MSS and the obloquy under which I laboured, in consequence of their publication. This committee met at three different times within the month of April, and my son was present at each of their meetings; at which he proposed that two respectable persons who were not members of the committee, should be appointed to receive the following information.

" The gentlemen are to be informed
 " whence the papers came, the name of the
 " gentleman, to whom they belonged, by whom
 " discovered,

“ discovered, and in what place, and manner.
“ The schedule of those that remain behind is
“ in my father’s possession, which he may shew,
“ and which shall be accounted for by me.”

“ S. W. H. Ireland.”

Copied verbatim from the above paper in his own hand writing, and in his presence read to the Committee.

It must be obvious that this proposal does not concur with Mr. Talbot’s opinion, as quoted from his letter above.

The following schedule, likewise, was presented to the committee by my son, accompanied with a solemn protestation, that every article marked with * he had seen, and would in a short time be put into my hands: that those, which

had not this mark, he had only heard were in existence, but that he had not seen them.*

- * Play of Richard II. in Shakspeare's MS.
- * Play of Henry II.
- * --- of Henry V.
- * 62 leaves of K. John.
- * 49 leaves of Othello.
- * 37 leaves of Richard III.
- * 37 leaves of Timon of Athens.
- * 14 leaves of Henry IV.
- * 7 leaves of Julius Cæsar.
- * Catalogue of his books in his own MS.
- * Deed by which he became partner of the
Curtain Theatre, with Benjamin Kele,
and John Hemynges.
- * Two drawings of the Globe Theatre on
parchment.
- * Verses to Q. Elizabeth.

* This schedule was voluntarily written by my son, on the 10th Jan. 1796, in the presence of Geo. Chalmers, and J. Reeves, Esqrs.

* Verses

- * Verses to Sir Francis Drake.
- * Do. to Sir Walter Raleigh.
- * Miniature of Shakspeare set in silver.

Chaucer with his MS notes

Book relative to Q. Elizabeth do.

Euphues with do.

Bible with do.

Bochas's Works with his MS notes.

Barclay's Ship of Fools do.

Hollinshead's Chronicle do.

Brief account of his life in his own hand.

Whole length portrait, said to be of him in
oil.

The committees alluded to, met three times without arriving at any satisfactory determinations; and as we found it difficult to select two persons to receive the information, my son had promised, Mr. Albany Wallis, as a professional man, voluntarily offered to be himself the depository of the secret. This trust, as he says, he was induced to accept, in order to clear up any doubt in the mind of the supposed Gentleman as to
any

any part of his property that might be endangered by such disclosure. In consequence of this, my son had frequent interviews with Mr. Wallis. But what was communicated, at those conferences, I have not learned from that gentleman, notwithstanding my reiterated importunities, and most anxious sollicitations for that purpose. His uniform answer to these sollicitations was, " Do not ask me any questions. It is not proper that you should know the secret. Keep your mind easy ; all will be well in time."

In support of these testimonies, by which my innocence must be clearly established in the judgments of all, who have the slightest pretensions to candor, or sound sense, I will make another quotation from a letter I received from Mr. Talbot, dated Cork, Sept. 16th, 1796.

" Dear Sir,

" Your last letter to me should have been answered sooner, and the promised affidavit
" been

" been sent, if I could have obtained an answer
 " from your Son to something I wrote about
 " some time since. For without his consenting,
 " if not joining in such a proceeding, I did
 " not think myself authorised, in taking any
 " step whatever."

" I will do all I can to extricate you from
 " any difficulties you may labour under, and
 " not having heard any thing from your son,
 " I will make an affidavit solely, That from
 " my intimacy with him, and my own know-
 " ledge of the mystery of the MSS you were
 " innocent of any design to mislead or deceive
 " the public."

" I beg leave to assure you, that I shall feel
 " the greatest pleasure in standing forward to
 " screen you, who are an innocent sufferer."

" M. Talbot."

I have now exhibited to the world all the
 testimonies of which I am in possession, relative

to the discovery of these papers. Whatever impression they are likely to produce, with regard to their authenticity, or spuriousness, they who can doubt my innocence in the transactions, after this statement must be hardened with an incurable malice, or an impenetrable incredulity. Yet for nearly two years, I have been exposed to the animadversions of every half-formed, and puny critic, who has been so far initiated in the elements of language, as to compose a malicious paragraph, and imbibed so much of the spirit of his fraternity, as to mistake petulance and slander for reason and investigation.

Besides these evils, I have reason to complain of the low tricks, and artifices, that have been resorted to, in order to excite the public prejudice against the MSS. I allude to the steps that were taken to preclude the Play of Vortigern from an equitable, and candid hearing. In support of this assertion, let me refer the reader to the following advertisement, published

lished by Mr. Malone, nearly three months before his enquiry made its appearance.

“ Spurious Shakspeare MSS.

“ Mr. Malone’s detection of this forgery
 “ has been unavoidably delayed by the engraving
 “ ings having taken more time than was expected ; but it is hoped that it will be ready
 “ by the end of this month.

“ *Feb. 16, 1796.*”

With regard to the delay, which the author of the advertisement seems to lament, I am compelled from my own knowledge of engraving, to conclude that it was wholly intentional. I know, and I speak with confidence on the subject, that with very little diligence the engravings, which Mr. Malone has incorrectly copied from my publication, would require a very small portion of time, for their completion. On the 25th of March, however, the play having been already advertised for the 2d of April, we find the critic, and his fellow labourers the engravers in such a state of forwardness that the

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publication

publication was advertised for Thursday March 31st, only two days before the intended representation of the piece. That it might be absolutely impossible that the mischief should not take effect, in several papers of the 1st of April, particularly the Oracle, and Morning Herald, two different and elaborate critiques in praise of Mr. Malone's enquiry made their appearance.

No man can entertain a doubt concerning the purposes, this well constructed delay was meant to answer. The play was ready for representation. It was to make its appeal to the general judgment ; and to stand or fall by its decision. But it was the scheme of this critic, to intercept this appeal ; to choak, and obstruct the avenues to the public understanding, and to overwhelm it with a torrent of ill-founded prejudices, and anticipated convictions.

I cannot pass over this part of the subject, without remarking, that in order to counteract as much as possible, the mischief of these artifices,

fices, I inserted three days afterwards an advertisement in the papers, in which I animadverted in very severe terms on the temerity of characterising his work, as a detection. In reply to this, Mr. Malone inserts a letter in the Gentleman's Magazine, in which he vindicates himself from the charge, in the following words.

“ With respect to the literary temerity ascribed
 “ to him (Mr. Malone) in characterising his
 “ work as a detection, he has no apprehension,
 “ that he shall incur any censure from the judi-
 “ cious part of mankind, since in this point of
 “ view he only benches by the side of his learned
 “ friend the present very respectable Lord Bi-
 “ shop of Salisbury, who 46 years ago published
 “ a deservedly admired tract, on a similar sub-
 “ ject, thus intitled, Milton no Plagiary, or a
 “ Detection of the forgeries contained in Lau-
 “ der's Essay, on the imitation of the moderns
 “ in the Paradise Lost by Milton. By the rev.
 “ John Douglas, &c.”

I have made this quotation, that the world

may remark the indecent effrontery of drawing an analogy between the rev. Bishop, and the author of the enquiry. Not to mention the wide and unmeasurable distance, between the literary endowments of the two writers, it must be palpable to every one, that there is no resemblance at all between the circumstances of Lauder's forgery, and the discovery of the MSS in my possession.

It is now time for me to close this part of the subject. I have shewn that the manner in which the artifices, of which I complain, have been conducted, is of so mean and pusillanimous a nature, that the malice has been of so low and so contemptible a species, as to reflect very serious dishonour on him, who has condescended to make use of it, because it may naturally be imagined, that a person calling himself a scholar and a gentleman, might have had recourse to worthier and more dignified weapons of controversy.

The other part of this work will be allotted
to

to an investigation of the critical attacks, that have been directed against the papers, in which I trust that Mr. Malone will be completely refuted. Perhaps it might be expected of me, that I should advert to the other antagonists, who have appeared in the field of the controversy. Of the first of these publications, entitled " A Letter to George Steevens, Esq. containing a Critical examination, &c. &c." As it has been abundantly refuted in a very able pamphlet, entitled " A Comparative Review of the opinion, &c. &c." I shall say nothing further. One Waldron likewise, has waded into the controversy, a bad actor and a worse critic. These are men, on whom I shall not animadvert. They who mistake their vanity for their capacity, and suppose that they are qualified to perform what they have presumption to attempt, are a tribe, on whom admonition will be wasted, and rebuke will be superfluous.

But I have confined my reasoning to Mr. Malone ; because, as he is known to the world
by

by what may be emphatically called his literary *labours* on other occasions, so has he distinguished himself by the bulk of his criticisms on this. What Dr. Warburton said of poor Theobald, he would have said with infinitely more justice of this critic: "That what he read he could transcribe; but as what he thought, if ever he did think, he could but ill express, so he read on; and by that means got a character of learning, without risking the imputation of wanting a better talent." In the part, however, which he has taken in this controversy, he has brought the only literary quality he has, that of patient, and laborious research, into suspicion. Whether it be the instinctive property of dulness to be dark, and bewildered, in proportion to the efforts it makes to be bright and perspicuous, or that though he has much reading, he has not enough for the office he has arrogated, it is certain that his book abounds with so many blunders, and overflows with so much presumption, that it seems a sort of mixed animal, engendered between

tween a persevering dulness on one side, and an envious mind on the other.

If I succeed in proving what I have asserted, I shall do a very essential service to literature itself. I shall have ridded the literary world of a sort of usurper. I shall have pulled from his dictatorship a man, who has aspired with the most presumptuous arrogance to a kind of oracular dignity on these matters. I shall have rescued the understandings of the public from the dominion of a critic, who, relying on the bulk of his labours, and the ponderous mass of his researches, has attempted to give laws on all topics of literature and criticism.

But should I not effect this purpose, I shall at least retire from the public tribunal with the soothing consciousness, of having vindicated my own character. For I trust I have laid before the world, a mass of documents, which will effectually lift me above the stroke of the venomous aspersions that have been directed so perseveringly against me. Should the language I
have

have occasionally used in these attacks, appear harsh and irritable, I beg to observe in my justification, that Mr. Malone's strictures are uniformly clothed in the language of asperity and personal sarcasm; and surely some indulgence ought to be allowed me, if I repel his attacks with the same weapons, and reply to unjust insinuations in the dictation of indignant and wounded feelings. It was for the purpose principally of vindicating myself, that I have ventured to make this appeal to the public. I might indeed complain of other misfortunes. I might advert to the pecuniary losses and the consumption of time, which these transactions have led me into. But when the most valuable of all human benefits, a clear and unsullied character is endangered, I could not but look on every other evil, as of trivial and subordinate consideration.

*Norfolk Street,
November, 1796.*

F I N I S.





